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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS  
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DIRECTIONS FOR CANNING CHICKEN AT HOME

Canning the surplus birds from the home poultry flock is oftentimes an economical practice. Either young or old birds may be canned by home methods. Plump well-fed hens two years old have as good texture and better flavor when canned than six-months old chickens.

Prepare the chicken for canning as you would for cooking. Pick, singe, remove pin feathers, and wash the birds. Then disjoint and cut them in the usual pieces, and discard the entrails. Remove and discard the oil sac and the lungs and kidneys, and do not use the giblets and eggs for canning. Be particularly careful not to break the gall bladder. If this does happen, do not use that chicken for canning because it will have a very unpleasant taste. Trim off any large pieces of fat. If there is a great deal of fat in the jar, it is likely to cook out on the rubber ring during the processing and may cause it to slip, thus spoiling the seal. Cut the white meat in large pieces from the breast bone and shoulders. Leave the meat on the bones in the other pieces. Cut the neck off close to the body, and use it and the other very bony pieces, such as the back and perhaps the feet, after they have been skinned, for making broth to fill up the jars. Cover these bony pieces with lightly salted cold water, bring to the boil, and simmer for 15 minutes to make this broth.

Chicken should be packed hot into hot, clean jars. It may be prepared for packing in either of two ways. Simmer the pieces of chicken in a small quantity of water until it is boiling hot all through. Or sear the pieces in hot fat until they are golden brown, and then pour hot broth over them and let them heat through to boiling temperature. Do not roll the meat in flour before cooking, because this makes it more difficult to process effectively.

Pack the pieces of hot chicken in pint jars. Put some white and some dark meat into each jar, or pack all the white meat into separate jars if desired for some special use. Be sure, however, not to get so close a pack that the broth can not circulate freely in the jar. Two 4-pound birds when cut up and cooked ready for packing into the jars, will fill five pint jars. Add a half teaspoon of salt to each pint jar and enough boiling broth to cover the meat. Adjust the rubber rings and covers and seal the jars.

Place the hot-packed jars immediately in a pressure canner, and process for one hour at 15 pounds pressure, or 250°F. Begin to count time when the pressure gauge registers 15 pounds, not before. When the hour is up, allow the canner to cool until the gauge registers zero before opening the pet cock. Then take the jars from the canner, invert them, and allow them to cool to room temperature.

(More complete directions for using the steam pressure canner are given in Farmers' Bulletin 1471, "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home").

